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ZNY CCCCC ZZH
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FM AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4330
INFO RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0887
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 0832

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 NDJAMENA 001127

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DEPARTMENT FOR AF, D, DRL, PRM; LONDON AND PARIS FOR
AFRICAWATCHERS; GENEVA FOR CAMPBELL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/11/2016
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREF](#) [ASEC](#) [CD](#) [SU](#)
SUBJECT: SIGNS OF INSECURITY IN EASTERN CHAD

Classified By: ECONOMIC/CONSULAR OFFICER JITU SARDAR FOR REASONS 1.4 (B
) and (D)

11. (C) SUMMARY: Clashes between Chadian government forces
and rebel groups have occurred in eastern Chad, following two
days of a visible military buildup by the Chadian National
Army and the movements of rebel groups inside eastern Chad.
There are also signs of possible infiltration by Darfur Peace
Agreement (DPA) non-signatories in the refugee camps.
Humanitarian organizations are expressing concerns that an
escalation in fighting will have significant consequences on
their operations. END SUMMARY.

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CLASHES BETWEEN GOC, REBEL FORCES
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12. (C) On September 11, fighting occurred between the Chadian
National Army and Chadian rebel groups in the area of Aram
Kolle, located 40 miles east of the eastern Chadian town of
Biltine. Reuters correspondent Pascal Fletcher reported to
Embassy officers the same day that Abdoulaye Abdelkarim,
spokesman for the Chadian rebel group United Force for Chad
and brother of Chadian rebel leader Mahamat Nour, told
Fletcher that close to 2,600 rebel fighters were currently
in eastern Chad, and were moving around the Chadian town of
Guereda. He asserted to Fletcher that the eventual objective
was "to make progress towards N'Djamena." Abdelkarim added
that forces were also close to the border town of Adre, and
that a number of GOC troops were deserting to join the rebel
cause. Fletcher also noted that Chadian military contacts
claimed that the GOC was in control of the situation, and
would be able to counter the rebel threat. Also on September
11, UNHCR Abeche Field Security Officer Christophe Ky
confirmed the attacks near Biltine, but could not confirm
that over 2,000 Chadian rebels were in the East. He added
that for the moment, UNHCR had not evacuated any of its staff
in refugees camps located near Guereda, Adre, and Biltine.

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INCREASED MILITARY ACTIVITY IN THE EAST
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13. (C) Prior to the clashes on September 11, humanitarian
organizations and Embassy contacts have reported increased
military activity in eastern Chad. UNHCR and International
Medical Corps (IMC) told the Embassy on September 7 that
local eyewitnesses noted the movement of 500 to 700 Chadian
rebel fighters on camel and horseback near the eastern town
of Guereda. IMC also said that they observed the movement of
Chadian military troops around Guereda to reinforce the
military battallion already present in the area. According

to them, the military was conducting live-fire exercises that resulted in local Chadian casualties. UNHCR also reported that while the Chadian military has not actively engaged the Chadian rebels that were seen near Guereda, other sporadic clashes had taken place in the area that resulted in casualties. They also said that GOC officials have refused to admit the presence of Chadian rebel activity, claiming that the heightened military presence was normal military activity.

14. (C) Contacts have told Embassy officers that the GOC has also increased its military activity in N'Djamena and Abeche. They point to the increased number of military flights to Abeche that have been carrying arms, munitions and vehicles, and the movement of soldiers and military vehicles towards the border region. Contacts have also alluded to arms shipments that have been coming to N'Djamena from the Ukraine, Nigeria and South Africa, which have proceeded directly to the Presidential palace. They point out that the concerns of the GOC with the advent of this latest rebel push are highlighted by President Deby's earlier-than-anticipated return from his trip to Paris. French Ambassador Jean-Pierre Bercot has noted to us that the visit went extremely well, but that these developments on the Chad-Sudan border could be "catastrophic" for stability in the region.

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POSSIBLE "LAST STAND" OF CHADIAN REBEL MOVEMENT
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15. (C) According to Embassy contacts who are believed to have ties to the Chadian rebel movement, rebel groups are now beginning a final push against the Deby regime. (NOTE: this closely resembles information provided to the Embassy by

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representatives from Sudanese rebel movements who were previously residing in N'Djamena. END NOTE). This new offensive follows a meeting in Khartoum among Sudanese authorities and leaders of the various Chadian rebel movements in late August, in which Sudanese officials are supposed to have noted Sudan's intention to adhere to its commitments in the July 26 agreement with the Chadian government and refuse sanctuary and support to Chadian rebels. However, these contacts note that the Sudanese authorities told the rebel leaders that before cutting off their support, the GOS would provide munitions and vehicles for a final push to remove Deby from power, and called on the rebel groups to organize themselves for a final attack against Chadian forces.

16. (C) As of this moment, according to these contacts, three groups had crossed the border: Mahamat Nour's Rassemblement pour la Force de Democratie (RDL) were entering through Guereda on camel and horseback; troops loyal to former Chadian Minister of Defense Mahamat Nouri were entering through the north and traveling to the northern region of Ennedi; and Chadian Arabs were entering from the southern part of the Chad-Sudan border, and were considering passing through the Central African Republic. It is unclear to us to what extent these movements are coordinated or independent in nature, but contacts note that close to 2,000 Chadian rebels are waiting along the Chad-Sudan border, poised to cross over at the instructions of their commanders.

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DPA NON-SIGNATORIES IN CHAD
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17. (C) Humanitarian organizations state that they are also quite concerned by the inflow of Sudanese rebels into Chad to recruit fighters from refugee camps to counter the Sudanese government's offensive in Western Darfur. IMC told the Embassy that refugee camps around the Chadian town of Iriba were being infiltrated by DPA non-signatories who were planning to recruit fighters for the Sudanese rebels' efforts

in Darfur. U.S. military observers with AMIS have reported to us in Abeche that military equipment and vehicles continue to flow into Sudan from Chad. As previous reporting from Embassy N'Djamena has indicated, it is, of course, unclear if this support is sanctioned by the GOC.

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CONCERNS OF HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATIONS
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18. (C) In response to the new indications of insecurity in eastern Chad, UNHCR has begun discussing contingency planning to evacuate staff and protect refugees in the event of increased violence along the Chad-Sudan border. UNHCR Director Serge Male has told the Embassy that UNHCR is extremely concerned that renewed fighting between Chadian rebels and the GOC could restrict humanitarian operations in the region. As he notes, violence could cause UNHCR and partner organizations to reduce operations to a skeleton staff (similar to UNHCR's decisions to reduce staff numbers prior to the April 13 attacks), or even stop humanitarian operations altogether should the situation deteriorate completely. Male has pointed out that UNHCR will continue to monitor the situation along the border to determine its next steps to try to ensure the safety of the humanitarian workers and refugees.

19. (U) Tripoli Minimize Considered.
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